

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MANILA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 094291

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, RP

SUBJECT: APPROACH TO GOP

REF: (A) MANILA 5557 (B) STATE 92191

1. PHILIPPINE CHARGE BELISARIO ON APRIL 12 DELIVERED TO
COUNTRY DIRECTOR FLECK THE FOLLOWING DIPLOMATIC NOTE
ADDRESSED TO SECSTATE.

2. BEGIN QUOTE: EXCELLENCY: I HAVE THE HONOR TO TRANS-
MIT TO YOU, UPON INSTRUCTIONS OF MY GOVERNMENT, THE FOLLOW-
ING MESSAGE FROM GEN. CARLOS P. ROMULO, SECRETARY OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE PHILIPPINES: BEGIN QUOTE. DEAR
SECRETARY VANCE, I APPRECIATE THE INTEREST WHICH YOU HAVE
SHOWN IN RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES, PARTICU-
LARLY IN REGARD TO THE ELECTIONS. AS PRESIDENT MARCOS HAS
REPEATEDLY ASSURED THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, THE
PHILIPPINES IS MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO HASTEN THE PROCESS
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OF NORMALIZATION IN ALL ASPECTS OF NATIONAL LIFE. THE
HOLDING OF THE ELECTIONS IS ITSELF THE CLEAREST MANIFESTA-
TION OF THE DESIRE TO RESTORE NORMALCY UNDER CONDITIONS
WHICH, I AM PLEASED TO NOTE, YOU VIEW AS A UNIQUE SITUATION
NOT QUITE ANALOGOUS TO AMERICAN PRACTICES.

YOUR THOUGHTFUL VIEWS, AS PRESENTED BY MR. LEE STULL, THE

OUTGOING CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT MARCOS IN THE SPIRIT OF THE TRADITIONAL FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEW DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIP INTENDED TO ENHANCE THAT FRIENDSHIP.

IN CANDOR, HOWEVER, I SHALL NOT ATTEMPT TO HIDE FROM YOU THE FACT THAT I AM DISTRESSED BY THE GAP IN OUR RESPECTIVE PERCEPTION OF VIEWS WHICH FOLLOWED THE IMPRESSIVE VICTORY OF PRESIDENT MARCOS IN THE ELECTIONS RECENTLY CONCLUDED ELECTIONS WHICH YOU YOURSELF ACCEPTED AS ORDERLY, PEACEFUL AND UN-MARRED BY THE VIOLENCE AND BLOODSHED WHICH MARKED PREVIOUS PHILIPPINE ELECTIONS.

WE TAKE JUSTIFIED PRIDE IN THIS DEVELOPMENT AND, AS I BELIEVE YOU WILL ADMIT, A CLEAR PROOF OF THE VAST IMPROVEMENT IN PHILIPPINE POLITICAL CONDITIONS AFTER FIVE YEARS OF MARTIAL LAW. IF NOTHING ELSE, THIS DEVELOPMENT JUSTIFIES THE PROCLAMATION OF MARTIAL LAW AS A TEMPORARY MEASURE TO CORRECT DEEP-SEATED AND UNWELCOME PRACTICES WHICH TENDED TO ERODE AND DID IN FACT ERODE THE FABRIC OF PHILIPPINE SOCIETY.

I FEEL I NEED NOT GO OVER THIS GROUND AGAIN. I DO FEEL HOWEVER THAT YOU ARE ENTITLED TO GET A CLEARER VIEW OF ALLEGED POST- TRENDS WHICH HAVE BEEN SENSATIONALIZED AND, IT APPEARS, WITH DELIBERATE INTENT, OUT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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ALL PROPORTION TO THE ACTUAL EVENTS. KNOWING YOUR OWN CONTEMPLATIVE CHARACTER IN AND OUT OF PUBLIC LIFE, I TRUST THAT YOU WILL NOT ACCEPT THE ERRONEOUS REPORTS AT FACE VALUE AND WITHOUT A FAIR EVALUATION OF THE FACTS IN THE CONTEXT OF PHILIPPINE CONDITIONS.

I HASTEN TO ASSURE YOU THAT THERE IS NO ATTEMPT ON THE PART OF THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT TO IMPOSE WHAT THE FOREIGN PRESS INACCURATELY CALLS HARSH AND REPRESSIVE MEASURES OR WHAT MR. STULL DESCRIBES AS POLITICAL RETRIBUTION. THERE IS A NOTE OF UN-INTENDED IRONY IN THE PHRASE QUOTE POLITICAL RETRIBUTION END QUOTE, FOR IN POINT OF FACT THE PARTY OF PRESIDENT MARCOS WON IN A FREELY CONTESTED ELECTIONS. AS YOU WILL CONCEDE, THE IMPOSITION OF PUNITIVE MEASURES AGAINST DEFEATED CANDIDATES IS A COMPLETELY GRATUITOUS ACT. THE REAL QUOTE PUNISHMENT END QUOTE IS THEIR REPUDIATION BY THE PEOPLE.

SOME WERE DETAINED FOR INVESTIGATION BUT ALL, EXCEPT FOR A HARD-CORE FEW, HAVE BEEN RELEASED. I STRESS THE FACT

THAT THESE ARE NOT SIMPLE VENDETTAS, MAFIA STYLE. IN

YOUR POSITION, YOU MIGHT HAVE DONE THE SAME, RECALLING THE WIDESPREAD DISORDERS OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENTS IN THE SIXTIES AND THE VIETNAM BACKLASH OF THE SAME PERIOD. THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT THE DETENTIONS ARE BASED ON HARD EVIDENCE OF AN ORCHESTRATED EFFORT TO OVERTHROW THE LEGALLY CONSTITUTED GOVERNMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES, A GOVERNMENT, FURTHERMORE, WHICH HAD JUST BEEN RESOUNDINGLY ENDORSED BY THE FILIPINO PEOPLE THROUGH THE POLLS.

IT IS, I ASSURE YOU, A MATTER OF PROFOUND REGRET AND DISAPPOINTMENT TO PRESIDENT MARCOS THAT HE HAD NO OTHER CHOICE BUT TO NIP IN THE BUD A DELIBERATE EFFORT TO THWART THE WILL OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE BY ELEMENTS WHICH, CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVING FAILED TO WIN THE ALLEGIANCE OF THE PEOPLE THROUGH LEGITIMATE AVENUES, RESORTED TO EXTRALEGAL MEANS TO SECURE THEIR ENDS.

ON CONSTITUTIONAL GROUNDS-NOT LEGAL TECHNICALITIES, AS MR. STULL UNFORTUNATELY PHRASED IT THESE ELEMENTS ARE ACCUSED OF SEDITION, INCITEMENT TO REVOLUTION, AND DIRECT CALLS FOR REBELLION. INDEED THEY WENT FURTHER THAN THAT. CACHES OF WEAPONS WERE DISCOVERED IN THE HOMES OF SOME CANDIDATES, TOGETHER WITH PLANS OF AN INCENDIARY CHARACTER WHICH WOULD APPEAR TO LINK THESE CANDIDATES WITH THE MAOIST NATIONAL PEOPLES ARMY (NPA).

IF, UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, PRESIDENT MARCOS HAD CHOICES OTHER THAN THE ONE HE TOOK, HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO ENTERTAIN SUGGESTIONS, SHORT OF ALLOWING THE COMPLETE OVERTHROW OF THE PHILIPPINE REPUBLIC. DESPITE THE GRAVITY OF THE CHARGES, I WISH TO CONVEY TO YOU THE ASSURANCES OF PRESIDENT MARCOS THAT THE PROCESS OF LAW WILL OPERATE, AS INDEED IT ALWAYS HAS.

ON POLITICAL GROUNDS, THE PRIME CONCERN OF THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT IS TO PREVENT A REPETITION OF THE ANARCHIC CONDITIONS OF 1972, DURING WHICH, TO OUR MUTUAL EMBARRASSMENT, THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN MANILA BECAME THE OBJECT OF SPORADIC BUT VICIOUS SIEGE.

PRESIDENT MARCOS IS FULLY AWARE THAT IT IS NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE, IN THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE PHILIPPINES, TO DISSIPATE THE POLITICAL PASSIONS OF THE MOMENT OR TO AVOID THE BITTERED REACTIONS ARISING FROM POLITICAL DEFEAT. BUT THIS IS ONE THING, A CRY FOR REVOLUTION ANOTHER. POSSIBLY THIS WOULD BE BETTER UNDERSTOOD IF IT CONFIDENTIAL

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IS KEPT IN MIND THAT WHILE CERTAIN ELEMENTS WERE ACCUSED OF RIMES UNDER PHILIPPINE LAW, THEIR ALLIES IN PEACEFUL PROTEST WERE ABSOLUTELY UNMOLESTED.

I TRUST I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GIVE YOU A BETTER INSIGHT INTO RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES. PRESIDENT MARCOS HAS AUTHORIZED ME TO CONVEY TO YOU AND TO PRESIDENT CARTER HIS DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE THE PROCESS OF NORMALIZATION. IT WOULD HELP IF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TOOK A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS OUR EFFORTS IN THIS DIRECTION. AS YOU NO DOUBT REALIZE, THIS IS A TASK OF UNCOMMON DIFFICULTY AND CAN NOT BE SOLVED BY COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE PRESSURES, ESPECIALLY FROM A PROVOCATIVE AND HOSTILE FOREIGN PRESS, SOME MEMBERS OF WHICH APPARENTLY ACTED LESS AS PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS THAN AS PARTISANS IN A DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL CONTEST. AS A DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVANT OF SCRUPULOUS AND GENEROUS INSTINCTS, YOU WILL NO DOUBT SHARE MY VIEW THAT SYMPATHETIC ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF OUR GOALS. OUR PAST RELATIONSHIPS SUGGEST THAT THIS SHOULD LEAD TO THE FURTHER ENHANCEMENT OF OUR COMMON INTERESTS. SINCERELY, CARLOS P. ROMULO. END QUOTE.

ACCEPT, EXCELLENCY, THE ASSURANCES OF MY HIGHEST CONSIDERATION. MARIO C. BELISARIO, MINISTER, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. END QUOTE. VANCE

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